

**GROTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS
GROTON, CONNECTICUT**

(*Attachments are available upon request from the Superintendent's Office.)

Committee of the Whole

August 19, 2019

A Committee of the Whole of the Groton Board of Education was held on August 19, 2019 in Room 11 of the School Administration Building.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Mrs. Kim Watson, Chairperson, at 6:05 p.m.

PRESENT

Mrs. Kim Shepardson Watson, Chairperson
Dr. Andrea Ackerman, Vice Chairperson
Mrs. Katrina Fitzgerald
Mrs. Gretchen Newsome
Mrs. Rita Volkmann
Mr. Jay Weitlauf
Mrs. Lee White

ABSENT

Mrs. Jane Giulini
Mrs. Rosemary Robertson

Dr. Michael Graner, Superintendent of Schools
Ms. Susan Austin, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Mr. Sam Kilpatrick, Director of Buildings and Grounds
Miss Addie Clark, Student Representative
Mr. Xavion Quito, Student Representative

1. Approval of Minutes of August 12, 2019

MOTION: Ackerman, White: To approve the minutes of August 12, 2019.
PASSED – UNANIMOUSLY

Dr. Graner introduced the new Principals for Northeast Academy Magnet School and Cutler Middle School:

Ryan Chaney, Northeast Academy Magnet School
Keith Danieluk, Cutler Middle School

2. Discussion of Board Retreat format with Isobel Stevenson from Connecticut Center for School Change (ATTACHMENT #1)

Dr. Graner asked the Board what were their thoughts for a Strategic Plan to accomplish.

Dr. Isobel Stevenson asked the Board to pair up with each other to discuss their thoughts.

Dr. Stevenson asked that the Board to share their thoughts with the full Board:

Fitzgerald: align the budget; support the budget; what and why we are doing and what is the cost

White: views it as an action plan and to make sure it happens – it is a living document. The plan should always have the Board goals behind it; it needs to ask what is the best thing for our kids – what is it that the Board wants.

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- Volkman: it should be the Board's vision of student success – focus on more communication with staff, parents, and students; more access to a rigorous curriculum; it should go back to the students not the budget.
- Zac: more success with students by making kids want to learn instead of needing to learn; test scores would rise when kids are engaged in what they learn
- Addie: having more curriculum based on students creating their own solutions
- Newsome: not losing any children in any subject; get students back to writing in cursive, better spelling skills, align with the Common Core Standards and NGSS; merging more classical teaching along with PIG5E; keep the whole child in mind
- Watson: living document; a road map
- Graner: asked what should the Board pay attention to; what is the profile of the learner
- Austin: she referred to the information in the Roles and Responsibilities document presented and suggested that we take a deeper look at the document
- Ackerman: we don't have high expectations for all of our students
- Kilpatrick: hold accountable; having different groups buy into the MYP and IB programs
- Dr. Graner asked what would be the next step:

- He suggested having a working dinner Retreats using a COW meeting in Sept., Oct., and Nov. for the Retreat. The Board members will be polled to determine the best dates.

3. Update regarding school opening

Dr. Graner noted:

- Convocation on August 26th at 7:30 a.m.; there will be a picnic at 11:00 a.m. at Washington Park
- On August 27th there will be a keynote speaker, Dr. Marc Brackett at 8:00 a.m. in the auditorium of FHS
- There were 2 administrators and 18 teachers at the Teacher Orientation meeting
- The final decision regarding CEP:
 - CK will provide meals for the next 4 years
 - CC will provide meals for the next 2 years
 - WSM will provide meals for the next year (possibly); this may carry over the new Middle School

4. **Suggested Future Topics**

Mrs. Volkmann made a referral to discuss the merit of continuing to have an After Graduation party versus an after Prom party.

Dr. Ackerman asked for feedback on the APEX program.

Mrs. White asked for feedback on the SBAC scores from this spring.

5. **Adjournment**

MOTION: Ackerman, White:

To adjourn at 7:50 p.m.

PASSED – UNANIMOUSLY

Roles and Responsibilities

of Board of Education Membership

Your acts may have an impact on the lives of thousands.

roles (r6l) *n*. The characteristic and expected social behavior of an individual.

re-spon-si-bil-i-ty /rɪˈspɑn(t) - s - bɪl - tē *n* 1: the quality or state of being responsible: as **a**: moral, legal, or mental accountability **b**: RELIABILITY, TRUSTWORTHINESS **2**: something for which one is responsible: BURDEN

re-spon-si-ble /-sˈpɑn (t) - s b / *adj*
1 a: liable to be called upon to answer as the primary cause, motive, or agent **b**: liable to legal review or in case of fault to penalties **2 a**: able to answer for one's conduct and obligations: TRUSTWORTHY **b**: being a free moral agent **3**: involving responsibility or accountability **4**: politically answerable; *esp*: required to submit to the electorate if defeated by the legislature - **re-spon-si-ble-ness** *n* - **re-spon-si-bly** /-blē / *adv*

syn RESPONSIBLE; ANSWERABLE, ACCOUNTABLE, AMENABLE, LIABLE mean subject to an authority that may punish default. **RESPONSIBLE** implies holding a formal organizational role, duty, or trust; **ANSWERABLE** suggests a relation between one having a moral or legal obligation and a court or other authority charged with oversight of its observance; **ACCOUNTABLE** suggest imminence of retribution for unfulfilled trust or violated obligation.

PART ONE

Boards of education serve the state and the local district, and are thus state and local officials.

1. The Connecticut Constitution requires that ...
“There shall always be free public elementary and secondary schools in the state. The Connecticut General Assembly shall implement this principle by appropriate legislation.”

The General Assembly has delegated much of this responsibility to local boards of education. Connecticut always has provided for considerable local autonomy.

2. The local school district has been created as a unit of the state government.

This means that a local board is responsible both to the local community and to state government.

3. A board of education member is a “State official functioning at the local level.” Thus board members must carry out responsibilities as set out in law or regulation.

4. General supervision and control of public education is vested in the State Board of Education.

Throughout the years, the State Board, working through the State Department of Education, has discharged its supervisory functions by both working with local school districts to improve school programs and by providing regulatory oversight of school districts.

5. Boards perform acts for which authority exists in the statutes and in court decisions. State law also gives each board discretionary powers to exercise responsibility and initiative locally.

6. The local board of education should function independently of other local government bodies, except as provided by state law and town charter.

The deliberate division of authority between the local board of education and other governmental bodies is intended to make school boards directly responsible to the people. Local selection of board members, either through election or appointment, is intended to keep schools close to the people. Boards connect the will of their community to the education of their children.

1. The State sets few legal qualifications for board membership, requiring only that members: (a) be electors in the town in which they serve; and (b) not be employed by the district.
2. Before entering upon the duties of the board, board members must take an oath of office.

3. High standards of citizenship are necessary in the men and women who serve on boards of education.

Board members should be men and women who hold universal public education in the greatest esteem; who believe that America's future

Responsibilities of board of education membership

An effective board member meets legal and personal qualifications

rests primarily on the superior development — physical, mental, moral, spiritual — of all our children and youth; and who will work to provide, defend and support the highest degree of public education for their communities.

1. Board members should view themselves as "team" members, able to work harmoniously with the group.

Board members require some time to become fully informed about the work of the board. As members of the board of directors of multimillion dollar enterprises, school board members must continually seek to enhance their knowledge and skills in the interest of serving their school districts.

2. The individual board member has no more authority than any other citizen when the board is not in session unless granted more authority by the board.
3. Board members speak and vote in accordance with their convictions, but once an official decision has been made, they should support that decision.
4. Board members should make no promises or commitments on school questions unless they are fully discussed and acted upon in the board meeting.
5. Board members should encourage teamwork, including effective communication and support and adherence to appropriate roles and

responsibilities between school administrators and the board.

6. Board members should learn the "chain of command" in the district, and encourage business to be conducted through proper channels.

7. Board members must understand that their primary responsibility is to approve and monitor policy.

1. The most important function of a board of education is to improve student achievement. This is done by developing, adopting, monitoring and evaluating the effects of board policies. The board develops and approves policies to provide a broad guide for action by school personnel so that schools may operate efficiently. Board members should recognize that their responsibility is not to run the schools, but to see that the schools are well run.

2. Policies give positive direction to administrators and staff by clearly defining their authority and responsibility. They permit discretion when appropriate and provide the ability for school district personnel to respond to variation within limits.
3. The board should be assisted in monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of policies by written and oral reports through appropriate administrators, by direct feedback, and interaction with the superintendent.
4. Written policies provide for delegation of authority, thus maintaining control and reducing

The board, not the individual, has authority thus the board of education must work as a team

Boards of education make policies, ensure policies are carried out, and judge the results

The board of education represents and works with the people

1. the need for board discussion on many matters.
5. Written policies permit development of administrative guides, procedures, rules and regulations.
6. In conjunction with the superintendent, each board should establish and maintain efficient methods of judging the effectiveness of policies and the district's schools.
7. Board policies should not include administrative details.
1. Board members are chosen to represent impartially all the people of the district rather than any political, social, religious, economic, or other special interest or geographical area.

Board members should recognize that at times special interests and pressure groups may attempt to exert undue influence on them. Board members must weigh all proposals in terms of the greatest good to the children in the district.
2. The board should consider the views of citizens and staff members and involve them in formulating school policies. However, final decisions on policies are the legal responsibility of the board.

One means of considering other viewpoints is through the appointment of advisory committees, which may be set up to consider a spe-

cific problem. The committee's responsibilities and authority should be carefully delineated in advance.

3. The policies and programs of the board need to be communicated to the community.

Keeping the public informed involves various media, including the press, radio and television, school bulletins, public meetings, conferences, and other methods of communication.
4. Good planning on the part of the board requires cooperative effort between the board and other community agencies, such as those concerned with health, recreation, safety, welfare and community development.
5. All meetings of the board must be held in public except where the board meets to discuss matters exempt under the Freedom of Information Act.
1. Securing adequate financial support is one of the most important responsibilities of the local board. This requires public understanding of the present and future educational needs of the community.

The public schools are funded from local property taxes, and state and federal aid.
2. The board is responsible for developing a school budget showing the cost of maintenance for the public schools, and an annual

Funding of the schools

report which shows costs, income and net cost to the town. (C.G.S. 10-222)

3. Public money is a public trust, therefore, every board should insist that all of its business transactions be ethical, open, and straightforward.

1. The board should give adequate time to addressing educational problems and issues concerning student achievement, rather than limiting attention to business and financial problems. Some boards make a conscientious effort to devote a portion of each meeting exclusively to student achievement.

2. The board should study its own procedures and methods and have appropriate policies to ensure effective and efficient use of meeting time.

There are many good ways to expedite the board's business. Among these are: having the agenda and all materials duplicated and mailed and/or emailed to board members sufficiently in advance of the meeting to allow them to be read beforehand; the use of a consent agenda; and placing more important matters earlier on the agenda. Board members should read their materials before the meetings and be prepared to discuss the issues they contain.

3. Board members should keep informed concerning educational ideas and trends.

4. Boards should examine and discuss annually the roles of the board and the superintendent

in order to maintain a strong and effective partnership in the educational process.

5. Board members should take full advantage of Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) and National School Boards Association (NSBA) meetings, workshops, and Conventions. Board members should devote time to their own professional development to improve their skills and to increase their effectiveness on the board.

In addition, CABE worked with the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents to provide a detailed listing of board and superintendent responsibilities as well as those that are jointly shared. This document, the *CABE/CAPSS Governance Statement*, can be found together with the *CABE/CAPSS Success Strategies for Leadership Team Evaluation* on the CABE website under the "Leadership" banner on the top of the page.

These two documents are "best practices" in the view of the two organizations (and the *Governance Statement* was endorsed by the State Board of Education). They serve as excellent discussion material for boards and superintendents on expectations of each and provide for better understanding of roles and responsibilities.

6. Board members also may profit by attending meetings of the parent-teacher groups and other relevant school groups.

Boards of education grow in service (continued)

Boards of education grow in service

PART TWO

Basic responsibilities of school board members

Boards are required by law to maintain "good public elementary and secondary schools," and to "implement the educational interests of the state" as defined in Section 10-4a. The statutes include the need to reduce racial, ethnic and economic isolation by providing educational opportunities for students to interact with students from other racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds as among the state's educational interests. These and other requirements are contained in Title 10 of the General Statutes. Boards may provide additional educational activities to serve the interests of the school district as they see fit. The following duties of local and regional boards of education are outlined in Section 10-220 and 10-221:

1. To secure, if necessary, educational opportunities in other school districts.
2. To "give all children in the school district as nearly equal advantage as may be practicable."
3. To "have charge of the schools" in the school district.
4. To "make a continuing study of the need for school facilities and a long term building program" and to make recommendations to the town.
5. To care for, maintain and operate "buildings, land, apparatus and other property used for school purposes."
6. To "determine the number, age and qualifications of pupils admitted to each school."
7. To "employ and dismiss teachers... subject to the provisions of Section 10-151 and 10-158a."

8. To "designate schools which shall be attended by the various children within the school district."
9. To make provisions to enable children residing in the district to attend school "for the period required by law."
10. To provide for transportation where "reasonable and desirable."
11. To "arrange with the board of education of an adjacent town for the instruction" of pupils who can more conveniently attend school in their district.

12. To furnish school accommodations so that children "five years of age and over and under twenty-one years of age who is not a graduate of a high school or vocational school may attend public school" in accordance with Section 10-186.
13. To "perform all acts required of it by the town or necessary to carry into effect the powers and duties imposed by law."
14. To "prepare a statement of educational goals for the school district" and to develop student objectives which relate directly to the statement of educational goals.
15. To evaluate the superintendent in a manner agreed upon by the board and superintendent.

Basic responsibilities of school board members

(continued)

Boards of education must also prescribe rules for the management, studies, classification, and discipline of the public schools, approve the selection of school library books, approve plans for district should try to attain, the board of education bears responsibility as to how it will be accomplished.

It is the primary responsibility of each board of education to develop a set of basic beliefs as to what constitutes a comprehensive educational program in the district.

Board members are pressed by decisions dealing with the direct and practical problems of school buildings, staff recruitment and retention, budgets, bond issues, and other specifics. Under these pressures, questions of educational philosophy may seem remote from their immediate obligations and concerns.

Effective board members realize, however, that educational decisions are made in the best interests of the children they serve only when the alternatives are examined in the light of basic beliefs about public education and what it should be trying to accomplish. The effective use of resources, both material and human, depends directly upon the clear definition of purposes, and the determination of priorities in working toward specific goals. This idea is reflected in state law requiring boards of education to set goals for the local district.

Only when board of education members examine alternatives and make decisions on the basis of a carefully defined set of fundamental educa-

tional principles and beliefs will they fulfill the central function of school board membership. In carrying out this responsibility for developing a philosophy of education and helping to determine the goals which public education in the district should try to attain, the board of education bears responsibility as to how it will be accomplished.

Board members are selected to represent the entire community, and not special groups or interests within it. They are selected for the purpose of exercising their best judgment on a fair and objective basis. It is essential that each board member approach responsibilities with a genuine desire to reach conclusions only upon the basis of facts and through examination of all points of view.

The problems of public education are difficult ones, for which there are seldom easy solutions. The best decisions are not made by hunches, guesses, and emotion, but by analysis of facts and information, and calm, selective judgment. In seeking sources of information, board members may and should look to their appointed professional administrators for the material which will assist them to build their own conclusions as well as outside sources, such as CABE or NSBA, as appropriate. They should strive to learn enough about the subject so that they "ask the right questions" and rest only when their questions have been answered. Board members should continually examine their own opinions and perceptions and strive to find the "best" answers to the issues they face.

The importance of philosophy and goals

The importance of philosophy and goals

Positive attitudes in meeting basic responsibilities

The curricular role of board of education members

No responsibility of the school board requires more clearly reasoned judgment than that of deciding policies on the content of the school curriculum, or the kind of educational experience it should provide. The question of “who should be taught what” is a basic area of education decision-making — and yet it is fairly common for board members to express surprise when informed that defining and adopting curricular policies is an inescapable obligation.

Curriculum is the means by which decisions on education philosophy and goals are implemented. Philosophy and curriculum are two parts of a whole. Goals are of little use unless steps and means are taken to carry them out; and the effectiveness of any curriculum is greatly dependent upon how closely its contents have been oriented to expected results.

The Connecticut General Statutes provide that boards of education are to establish the program of studies for the public schools, and several statutes impose specific requirements. This responsibility should be interpreted as the broad duty to create teaching positions and to establish courses. Development of specific curriculum has traditionally been left to the professionals. This idea was codified in Public Act 08-153, which establishes that boards of education are required to appoint a “school district curriculum committee” that shall “recommend, develop, review and approve all curriculum for the district”. Conn. Gen. Stat. Section 10-220(e).

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education (CABE) serves local boards by promoting public education and by working for adequate state support of education and enactment of legislation that favors the interests of the public schools. Its broad communications program is designed not only to build support for public education on state and national levels but also to help local school districts create support in their communities. Approximately 85% of the school boards in Connecticut to belong to CABE.

CABE programs include in-service education, liaison and individual consultation with school districts, legislative and legal services, research, public relations, publications, insurance, computer, communications, administrator searches and policy services. CABE exerts influence on national education policy through its affiliation with the NSBA an association of state school board associations, and by testifying at governmental hearings on matters pertaining to education.

CABE's headquarters are in Wethersfield, where liaison with the State Department of Education, other state agencies and the state legislature is maintained. CABE houses an information center with extensive research files, a library and sample policy files. The *CABE Journal*, CABE's principle periodical, is sent to all member board members, administrators and other education leaders in the state.

Each year CABE sponsors a variety of meetings and conferences for school board members. These include intensive workshops on board membership, board/superintendent relations and negotiations. Included are sessions which emphasize the fundamentals of school board membership. The highlight of the association's meetings is the annual Convention at which experts analyze, discuss and debate the problems and challenges confronting our public schools.

The Connecticut Association of Boards of Education

Connecticut Code of Ethics for Boards of Education

The Code of Ethics is based upon "Standards of Leadership for Members of Boards of Education" recommended by the CABE Board of Directors in 1974, and on the preliminary "Code of Ethics" recommended in 1977.

1. *I will* be a staunch advocate of high quality free public education for all Connecticut children. In fulfilling my responsibilities, I will think of "children first."
2. *I will*, as an agent of the state, uphold and enforce all laws, rules, regulations and court orders pertaining to public schools. I will strive to bring any needed change only through legal and ethical procedures.
3. *I will* strive to help create public schools which meet the individual educational needs of all children regardless of their ability, race, creed, sex or social standing.
4. *I will* work unremittingly to help my community understand the importance of proper support for public education, whether it be in providing adequate finance, optimum facilities, staffing and resources, or better educational programs for children.
5. *I will* join with my board, staff, community and students in becoming fully informed about the nature, value and direction of contemporary education in our society. I will support needed change in our schools.
6. *I will* strive to ensure that the community is fully and accurately informed about our schools, and will try to interpret community aspirations to the school staff.
7. *I will* recognize that my responsibility is not to "run the schools" through administration, but together with my fellow board members, to see that they are well-run through effective policies.
8. *I will* attempt to confine my board action to policy-making, planning and appraisal, and will help to frame policies and plans only after my board has consulted those who will be affected by its actions.
9. *I will* arrive at conclusions only after discussing all aspects of the issue at hand with my fellow board members in meeting. I will respect the opinions of others, and abide by the principle of majority-rule.
10. *I will* recognize that authority rests only with the whole board assembled in meeting, and will make no personal promises nor take any private action which may compromise the board.
11. *I will* acknowledge that the board represents the entire school community, and will refuse to surrender my independent judgment to special interest or partisan political groups. I will never use my position on the board for the gain of myself, my family or my friends.
12. *I will* hold confidential all matters pertaining to schools which, if disclosed, might needlessly injure individuals or the schools.
13. *I will* insist that all school business transactions be open and ethical.

Connecticut Code of Ethics for Boards of Education *(continued)*

Connecticut Code of Ethics for Boards of Education

(continued)

14. *I will* strive to appoint the best professional leader available when a vacancy exists in the chief administrative position.
15. *I will* strive to appoint the best trained technical and professional personnel available, upon recommendation by the appropriate administrative officer.
16. *I will* support and protect school personnel in the proper performance of their duties. I will strive to ensure that all personnel have not only the requisite responsibilities, but the necessary authority to perform effectively.
17. *I will* refer all complaints through the proper “chain of command” within the system, and will act on such complaints at public meetings only when administrative solutions fail.